

Government of the District of Columbia

ZONING COMMISSION



ZONING COMMISSION ORDER NO. 419

Case No. 83-16

December 19, 1983

The application in Case No. 83-16 is a request from Potomac Ventures Inc. (John A. Harris and Richard J. Donohoe) to amend the zoning map from R-1-B to C-2-A for lots 1013 and 1017 in Square 1299 near Wisconsin Avenue and Whitehaven Street, N.W. The subject site is at the rear of property located at 1901 Wisconsin Avenue, is approximately 31,978 square feet in size, has no street frontage and is presently being used as a parking lot to serve neighboring commercial uses. The applicants indicated that they had no present development objectives for the site. Their intention was to secure matter-of-right status for the existing parking use.

The existing R-1-B zoning on the site permits matter-of-right development of single-family residential uses for detached dwellings with a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet, a minimum lot width of fifty feet, a maximum lot occupancy of forty percent, and a maximum height of three stories/forty feet. The parking lot is permitted as a special exception subject to approval from the Board of Zoning Adjustment.

The C-2-A District permits matter-of-right low density development including office, retail and all kinds of residential uses, to a maximum FAR of 2.5 with non-residential uses limited to 1.5 FAR, a maximum height of fifty feet and a maximum lot occupancy of sixty per cent for residential uses. A parking lot is permitted as a matter-of-right.

The Commission notes that the report of the Office of Planning (OP) dated December 9, 1983 recommended that the application be denied a public hearing. The Office of Planning noted that the property is being used as a parking lot under a five year BZA approval that is valid until January, 1986. The OP further noted that the property is best suited for a commercial use, but because of the sensitive location of the site, a Planned Unit Development would be the best approach to development.

The Commission received a report from Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3B, dated December 15, 1983, in opposition to the application. The ANC believed that the site should remain a parking lot. A change in zoning to C-2-A would encourage the possibility of future development on the property.

The Commission also received a resolution from ANC-2E (formerly 3A) dated December 14, 1983, which supported rezoning the property to C-1 rather than C-2-A and which expressed concerns relative to screening and trash removal.

The site is located in a heavily congested area with no direct street access of its own. Although the Commission agrees with the Office of Planning and the applicant that the property is not suitable for development with single family detached houses on 5,000 square foot lots, the Commission believes that rezoning at this time is not appropriate. There is no development proposal before the Commission to enable the Commission and other agencies to assess possible impacts to the surrounding community. If the applicant wishes to retain the present parking lot use in perpetuity, the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) can grant the use by special exception if circumstances warrant.

The Mayor has prepared and presented to the City Council a proposed Comprehensive Plan. The Council is in the process of reviewing the draft comprehensive plan. Upon the completion of plan review and subsequent adoption, the Office of Planning has informed the Commission that it will engage in the formulation of an inventory of parcels which may be in need of rezoning for a variety of reasons on a ward by ward basis. Since the subject property has no specific development proposal to review, the Commission believes that this particular property should be included in the City-wide Office of Planning review, and not be considered at this time.

Based on the foregoing reasons, the Commission therefore orders that the application be DENIED without a hearing.

Vote of the Commission taken at its public meeting held on December 19, 1983: 5-0 (Commissioners Lindsley Williams, Maybelle T. Bennett, Walter B. Lewis, George M. White, John G. Parsons to deny).



LINDSLEY WILLIAMS
Zoning Commission
Chairman



STEVEN E. SHER
Zoning Secretariat
Executive Director